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SUBJECT: JAPANESE MORNING PRESS HIGHLIGHTS 05/01/07-1

Prime Minister Abe in Washington:

- 1) Bush-Abe summit meeting confirms "irreplaceable alliance" as base for future multilateral cooperation
- 2) President Bush to link consideration to abduction issue to decision on whether to remove North Korea from list of terrorist-sponsoring states
- 3) Summit meeting reveals gap still exists between US, Japan on North Korea issue
- 4) Bush "accepts" Abe's "apology" for comfort-women issue
- 5) Gist of summit meeting between President Bush and Prime Minister Abe
- 6) Summit meeting joint statement includes cooperation to stem global warming
- 7) Gap between US, Japan on global warming: No mention in summit statement about "obligation" to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions
- 8) Summit meeting agreement on intellectual property protection
- 9) Summit meeting reaches de facto agreement on prior discussion on future FTA
- 10) US, Japanese leaders both deem their first summit meeting a resounding success
- 11) One bitter lesson learned for Abe in US was apparent inability to transmit intention on comfort-women issue

Articles:

- 1) Summit meeting -- Japan, US searching for multilateral cooperation with "irreplaceable alliance" as the pivot

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Excerpt)

April 28, 2007

By Fumi Igarashi in Washington

Prime Minister Abe and President Bush in their summit meeting with on April 27 (late night in Japan) confirmed to strengthen cooperation in a broad range of areas from the North Korea nuclear and abduction issues to measures to counter global warming. At the press conference that followed, Abe repeatedly referred to the president as "George" and stressed their closeness. But compared to the former prime minister, Koizumi, there was an undeniable feeling that the closeness of the two leaders had "retreated." However, different from Koizumi, who tilted solely toward the US, there was a desire to have a new bilateral alliance that would seek out multilateral cooperation, with the "irreplaceable alliance" as the pivot, in order to respond to changes in the international situation.

2) US president promise to prime minister that consideration to abductions issue would be given in removing North Korea from terrorist list

MAINICHI (Top play) (Excerpt)  
Eve., April 28, 2007

By Chiyako Sato in Washington

In his summit meeting with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at the president's retreat, Camp David, in the suburbs of Washington, President Bush said, "We will factor in the abduction issue" in connection with removing North Korea from the list designating it as a country sponsoring terrorism. He was replying to a request from the prime minister that consideration be given to the abduction

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issue at the time of removing that country from the list of terrorist-supporters. The president said: "I promise there will be no change" in support for the abduction issue. He stressed: "We must not let our strong stance toward the abduction issue weaken."

3) Covering the gap on North Korea: Prime Minister Abe -- "Common target of nuclear and other issues"; President Bush -- "Support Japan on abduction issue"

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 3) (Excerpt)  
April 28, 2007

The summit meeting between Prime Minister Abe and President Bush became a forum for re-coordinating US policy toward North Korea that had turned toward dialogue with that country. The US confirmed that if North Korea does not carry out its promise to abandon nuclear weapons, the US would heighten pressure on it. The president, turning to the abduction issue, clearly stated that he would support Japan's efforts to resolve the issue. However, the moves of North Korea are hard to read, and the truth is that there is a lack of specific means to pressure it. In case the issue becomes prolonged, it is unclear how long Japan and the US can maintain their cooperation on this problem.

4) US President Bush "accepts apology" of Prime Minister Abe on comfort-women issue

SANKEI (Page 1) (Full)  
April 28, 2007

Ruhi Ahiru in Washington

In his summit meeting with the President Bush, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe apologized for the comfort-women issue, stating, "As a human being and as the prime minister, I feel genuine sympathy for the comfort women for their having to undergo such painful experiences under excruciating circumstances. I feel sorry that they were placed in such a situation."

He also stated: "The 20th Century was a century in which there were many human-rights transgressions, and Japan, too, was a part of it."

I would like Japan to make major contributions in the 21st Century so that it will be a better age without human-rights violations."

In response, President Bush expressed his understanding, saying: "I accept the Prime Minister's apology. It was a frank statement filled with great compassion. Our task is to lead our countries by learning the lessons from the past."

The prime minister's statement aimed to assuage the issue, having in mind the resolution criticizing the Japanese government that is now before the US House of Representatives, as well as the protest demonstration outside the White House on April 26.

5) Gist of summit meeting between Prime Minister Abe and US President Bush

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Full)  
April 30, 2007

The following is the main contents of the summit meeting between Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and US President Bush on April 27, as

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briefed by the Japanese government:

Overall Japan-US relations

The two leaders agreed to deal with the various issues in East Asia, based on the Japan-US alliance, and to further strengthen the alliance. The two shared the common view of the importance of having deterrence capabilities based on the bilateral alliance and they reconfirmed they would promote the realignment of US forces in Japan and cooperate on ballistic missile defense.

The two leaders compiled a joint statement on such areas as the economy, cultural exchanges, and nuclear energy. On the economic front, keeping in mind the rise of new economies and their impact on the global economy, the two agreed to strengthen cooperation on a broad agenda that includes energy, intellectual property rights, and safe and smooth trade.

From the point of view that the cornerstone of the bilateral alliance lies in exchanges and mutual understanding between the two peoples, the two leaders agreed also on reform of the Japan-US cultural and educational exchange council to strengthen the intellectual exchanges between the two countries. They confirmed their intention to cooperate based on a joint Japan-US action plan on nuclear energy.

Prime Minister Abe: As a mission of the Abe Cabinet, I am aiming at emerging from the postwar regime. With the security environment around Japan greatly changing, I established just before traveling to the United States a blue-ribbon panel of experts for the purpose of rebuilding the legal base for national security to match the age. On the economic front, I will carry out structural reforms.

It is important to steadily implement the agreement reached last year in May on the realignment on US forces in Japan, and I will carry out the relocation of the US forces' Futenma Air Station in accordance with the agreement.

President Bush: Cooperation will be carried out by the responsible cabinet members.

North Korea problem

The two leaders agreed to make efforts through the six-party talks to bring about North Korea's complete scrapping of its nuclear weapons and nuclear programs.

President: Even now, I am left with a strong impression from the meeting last year with Sakie-san, the mother of Megumi Yokota, one of the victims of abduction by North Korea. I would like to reconfirm by unchanging support for the Japanese government.

Prime Minister: Will North Korea be removed from the list of

terrorist-supporting countries?

President: When we approach that issue, we will factor in consideration for the abduction issue. This process must never weaken the strong feelings toward the abduction victims.

Relations with China; measures to prevent global warming

Both leaders welcomed the fact that China was carrying out a more

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constructive role in the international community.

Prime Minister: Even Premier Wen cited the necessity of building an effective international framework that all major carbon-dioxide emitting countries could join, including China and India.

War on terror; Middle East situation

Prime Minister: We understand and support US efforts to stabilize and reconstruct Iraq. (He then explained the bill amending the Iraq Reconstruction Assistance Special Measures Law to extend it for two years.)

The two leaders agreed on strengthening assistance to Afghanistan and Pakistan. They also agreed, as has the international community, to search for ways to resolve peacefully the main case of Iran, while heightening pressure on that country.

Other issues

Prime Minister: I thank the United States for its support of Japan's bid to become a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council.

It is important to deepen dialogue and cooperation with major democratic nations in the Asia-Pacific region, and to support the basic direction toward prosperity and democratization in the region. In addition to Japan and the United States, it would be beneficial for countries, such as India and Australia to engage in dialogue.

The stability of the Middle East is a matter of vital interest for Japan. I will visit Middle-East countries, starting on the 28th. I will make efforts to help stabilize the region by strengthening relations with Arab states. In a dimension that transcends a diplomacy that gives priority to energy in relations with each country, I would like to build broad and multilayered relations in the region.

6) Japan, US to cooperate on global warming, joint statement released at summit notes

ASAHI (Top Play) (Excerpts)  
Evening, April 28, 2007

A joint statement on greenhouse gases, the cause of global warming, was released after talks between Prime Minister Abe and President Bush held on the morning of Apr. 27 (midnight of the same day, Japan time) at Camp David in a suburb of Washington DC. The US, which has been negative toward the climate change issue, has indicated a stance of cooperating in areas where its interests are in agreement with Japan's, such as energy security and development of alternative forms of energy.

According to the joint statement, Japan and the US agreed to continue to engage in the ultimate objective of stabilizing the concentration of greenhouse gases in the air and consider ways to press ahead with this effort. The statement also noted that both countries would boost government-level talks and that the US would send a delegation consisting of senior government officials to Japan before the G-8 Summit in June in order to deepen discussions on the issue.

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It is a key agenda item for the prime minister, who wants to display leadership regarding environmental measures, to have the US, which pulled out of the Kyoto Protocol, return to the international framework to combat global warming. The Japanese side has given high marks to the joint statement, with Abe saying that the statement was a major step forward as it was able to obtain US pledge for cooperation.

#### Footing for post-Kyoto Protocol discussions

(Commentary) The joint statement the leaders of Japan and the US released on Apr. 27 categorically mentioned that the objective of measures to counter global warming is to stabilize the concentration of greenhouse gases in the air. It can be said that it was an achievement for Japan in the sense that it has succeeded in clearly setting the footing for future discussions to have the US return to an international framework for measures to combat global warming.

There is nothing new about this objective, because it is the same as the one advocated in the Framework Convention on Climate Change, the starting point for the world's global warming preventive measures. The point is that the US, which walked out of the 2005 Kyoto Protocol mandating signatory countries to cut emissions of greenhouse gases, is a signatory to that convention.

Global emissions of carbon dioxide are now about double the amount nature, such as forests, absorbs. In order to stabilize the concentration of carbon dioxide, it is in theory necessary to halve the amount of emissions. The joint statement noted that Japan and the US start discussions on cutting carbon dioxide emissions on the footing they share.

The US Supreme Court early this month decided that greenhouse gases are pollutants. The State of California is already aiming at implementing emissions regulation based on that premise. The court decision will likely back this movement.

For this reason, it has been a pressing issue for the Bush administration to come up with some countermeasures before various states start introducing their own regulations.

However, the leaders of the two countries did not exchange any concrete views on measures to address emissions cut targets or the deadline to meet such targets. Discussions on the creation of a concrete post-Kyoto framework have yet to be started.

7) Japan-US summit meeting in discussing global-warming countermeasures did not step into obligatory reduction of greenhouse gases, revealing gap with Europe

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Excerpt)  
Eve., April 28, 2007

By Kazuaki Fujii in Washington

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and President Bush in their summit meeting on April 27 announced cooperation on measures to counter global warming and to consider ways how the US and Japan might take the lead in building a framework for the post-2013 period when the Kyoto Protocol will have expired. However, they did not step into any specific discussion, such as setting targets for greenhouse-gas reduction, or making it obligatory for companies to reduce

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emissions. The European Union (EU) has set high numerical targets and is moving ahead with reduction centered on private companies. The gap between the EU on one side and Japan and the US on the other side is becoming increasingly wide.

8) Japanese, US leaders agree on protection of intellectual property rights

ASAHI (Page 3) (Excerpts)  
Evening, April 28, 2007

Washington, Kaori Nishizaki

Prime Minister Abe and US President Bush after a meeting on Apr. 27 released a document advocating strengthening bilateral cooperation in the economic area. The document incorporated the worldwide strengthening of the protection of intellectual property rights, promotion of new multilateral trade talks (Doha Round) at the World Trade Organization (WTO), efforts to promote the envisaged free trade area for the Asia Pacific (FTAAP) and exchanges of information on a (possible Japan-US) free trade agreement.

With both leaders stressing the Japan-US alliance in the economic fields as well, no major issues concerning trade disputes surfaced. Regarding the high-profile US beef issue, the president expressed his hope to see Japan ease its import conditions. He applied pressure only in a soft manner noting: "US beef is healthy. We will serve hamburgers to the prime minister and his entourage for today's lunch."

9) Japanese, US leaders agree to start prior negotiations on bilateral FTA

ASAHI (Page 11) (Excerpts)  
April 28, 2007

Kaoru Nishizaki, Washington

In the Japan-United States summit on April 27, the two leaders agreed that the two countries would promote information exchange on the details of the free trade agreements (FTA) and the economic partnership agreements (EPA) that they have so far concluded. The aim is to find out what type of FTA is possible for the two countries to form. Japan and the US will launch preliminary negotiations in effect for future talks on concluding a bilateral FTA.

A senior US official who stresses the importance of a Japan-US FTA commented: "We are fully aware that the Abe administration, keeping the upcoming House of Councillors election in mind, remains unable to refer to liberalization of trade in agricultural products. In the world, however, moves pursuing FTAs have begun in full swing. Japan and the US also should look into the possibility; otherwise, they will lag behind the times."

Japan has concluded EPAs or FTAs with six countries, while the US has signed or agreed on such accords with 13 countries. Since the contents of each accord are different, both sides have decided to explain to each other the details of the protection of intellectual property rights, competition policy, investment, agriculture, and other areas specified in each agreement.

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10) Japanese, US leaders make great effort so that summit meeting will be seen as success

MAINICHI (Page 1) (Full)  
Eve. April 28, 2007

By Chiyako Sato in Washington

"Last night, we were invited over by George and Laura, and we had a wonderful time with the President and the First Lady." Prime Minister Abe, in the joint news conference after his summit meeting with President Bush, called the president by his first name three times. The prime minister, once it was decided at the summit meeting to use first names "George" and "Shinzo," immediately put it into practice. Although "shared values" were stressed in the talks, Japan-US relations have some noticeable gaps in understanding. Both leaders, however, played up their performances to make sure that the Abe visit to the US would come across as successful.

In particular, on the North Korea problem, both leaders took special pains so that their differences would be seen as less than they were. The US administration, which has changed to a soft-line, has distanced itself gradually from the hard stance of the Abe

administration, which is unable to compromise on the abduction issue.

On this point, the president likely spoke in response to the Japan side's expectation. The president said he was demanding of North Korea not just to shut down its nuclear facility, but also to abandon all nuclear programs. And if the North did not keep its promise, he said, "We have the capability of carrying out even more sanctions."

11) Prime Minister Abe's bitter lesson during his US trip: Unable to transmit his intention on the comfort-women issue

SANKEI (Page 5) (Full)  
April 30, 2007

By Ruri Ahiru in Abu Dhabi

The visit of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to the United States first of all scored a great success on the point of building a relationship of trust with Abe's counterpart, President Bush. However, the only bitter lesson that lingers seemed to have been the comfort-women issue, which remains pending. The prime minister, in his joint press conference with the US president, spoke this way of the comfort-women issue: "I feel genuine sympathy as an individual and as the prime minister for those who were comfort women, and I feel sorry that they were placed in such a situation." He continued: "The 20th Century was an age in which the human rights of people were transgressed in every region (of the world). I would like to the 21st Century to be a splendid age in which there will be no human-rights violations."

Prior to that, in his meeting with senior members of the US Congress, Abe said about the same thing. And even in an interview with CNN before his trip to the US, he used the same expressions.

The prime minister's intention was clear. It was important for him to express directly his sympathy for the situation the comfort women had been in. In previous replies to the Diet and other occasions, he

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had pointed out, "Although there were was coercion in the broad sense, in which comfort women were made such against their wills, there was no coercion in the narrow sense, such as acts of being rounded up by constituted authorities and made into comfort women." Although he had explained that there had been no coercive recruitment by constituted authorities, the overseas media reported it as if he lacked a human-rights consciousness.

Regarding the reason for sympathizing with the comfort women, he did not refer to involvement by the Japanese government or constituted authorities, but stressed that there existed at the time "such conditions" into which the comfort women were placed. He strongly suggested that Japan was not the only country during the war committing human-rights transgressions. His aim was make the others turn their eyes toward the future and away from the past. By this, he was not compromising on his basic line that there had not been any coercion in the narrow sense.

However, the phrases he has so carefully prepared beforehand did not bring about the results that he had aimed for. Despite his having repeatedly used the same phrases even before his trip to the US, much of the Japanese media did not catch his intention or ignored it, stressing the issue "apology to the US."

On the other hand, the overseas media, having a fixed view that there had been forced recruitment of comfort women, did not transmit the delicate nuances of the prime minister's remarks. Even President Bush, who heard the explanation from Abe directly, simply concluded that it was an "apology," saying, "I accept the Prime Minister's apology (to the former comfort women)." As a result, according to a source accompanying the prime minister, "The image projected at home and abroad that all he did was repeatedly apologize" could not be denied.

The prime minister's visit to the US thus left a strong impression

that when it comes to historical issues, in order to obtain understanding, even for example from an allied country, there should have been more persistent efforts and devices.

DONOVAN